Bhagat Singh 1931

Why I am an Atheist

It is a matter of debate whether my lack of belief in the existence of an Omnipresent, Omniscient God is due to my arrogant pride and vanity. It never occurred to me that sometime in the future I would be involved in polemics of this kind. As a result of some discussions with my friends, (if my claim to friendship is not uncalled for) I have realised that after having known me for a little time only, some of them have reached a kind of hasty conclusion about me that my atheism is my foolishness and that it is the outcome of my vanity. Even then it is a serious problem. I do not boast of being above these human follies. I am, after all, a human being and nothing more. And no one can claim to be more than that. I have a weakness in my personality, for pride is one of the human traits that I do possess. I am known as a dictator among my friends. Sometimes I am called a boaster. Some have always been complaining that I am bossy and I force others to accept my opinion. Yes, it is true to some extent. I do not deny this charge. We can use the word 'vainglory' for it. As far as the contemptible, obsolete, rotten values of our society are concerned, I am an extreme sceptic. But this question does not concern my person alone. It is being proud of my ideas, my thoughts. It cannot be called empty pride. Pride, or you may use the word, vanity, both mean an exaggerated assessment of one's personality. Is my atheism because of unnecessary pride, or have I ceased believing in God after thinking long and deep on the matter? I wish to put my ideas before you. First of all, let us differentiate between pride and vanity as these are two different things.

I have never been able to understand how unfounded, baseless pride or empty vanity can hinder a person from believing in God. I may refuse to acknowledge the greatness of a really great person only when I have got fame without doing any serious efforts or when I lack the superior mental powers necessary to become great. It is easy to understand but how is it possible that a believer can turn into a non-believer because of his vanity? Only two things are possible: either a man deems himself to be in possession of Godly qualities, or he goes a step further and declares himself to be a god.

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In both these states of mind he cannot be an atheist in the true sense of the word. In the first case, it is not an outright rejection of God's existence; in the other, he is affirming the existence of some kind of supernatural power responsible for the working of universe. It does not harm our argument whether he claims to be a god or considers God to be a reality in existence above his own being. The real point, however, is that in both cases he is a theist, a believer. He is not an atheist. I want to bring home this point to you. I am not one of these two creeds. I totally reject the existence of an Omnipresent, all powerful, all knowing God. Why so? I will discuss it later in the essay. Here I wish to emphasise that I am not an atheist for the reason that I am arrogant or proud or vain; nor am I a demi-god, nor a prophet; no, nor am I God myself. At least one thing is true that I have not evolved this thought because of vanity or pride. In order to answer this question I relate the truth. My friends say that after Delhi bombing and Lahore Conspiracy Case, I rocketed to fame and that this fact has turned my head. Let us discuss why this allegation is incorrect. I did not give up my belief in God after these incidents. I was an atheist even when I was an unknown figure. At least a college student cannot cherish any sort of exaggerated notion of himself that may lead him to atheism. It is true that I was a favourite with some college teachers, but others did not like me. I was never a hardworking or studious boy. I never got an opportunity to be proud. I was very careful in my behaviour and somewhat pessimistic about my future career. I was not completely atheistic in my beliefs. I was brought up under the care and protection of my father. He was a staunch Arya Samaji. An Arya Samaji can be anything but never an atheist. After my elementary education, I was sent to D. A. V College, Lahore. I lived in the boarding house for one year. Besides prayers early in the morning and at dusk time, I sat for hours and chanted religious Mantras. At that time, I was a staunch believer. Then I lived with my father. He was a tolerant man in his religious views. It is due to his teachings that I devoted my life for the cause of liberating my country. But he was not an atheist. His God was an all-pervading Entity. He advised me to offer my prayers every day. In this way I was brought up. In the Non-cooperation days, I got admission to the National College. During my stay in this college, I began thinking over all the religious

polemics such that I grew sceptical about the existence of God. In spite of this fact I can say that my belief in God was firm and strong. I grew a beard and 'Kais' (long head of hair as a Sikh religious custom). In spite of this I could not convince myself of the efficacy of Sikh religion or *any religion at all, for that matter*. But I had an unswerving, unwavering belief in God.

Then I joined the Revolutionary Party. The first leader I met had not the courage to openly declare himself an atheist. He was unable to reach any conclusion on this point. Whenever I asked him about the existence of God, he gave me this reply: "You may believe in him when you feel like it." The second leader with whom I came in contact was a firm believer. I should mention his name. It was our respected Comrade Sachindara Nath Sanyal. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in connection with Karachi conspiracy case. Right from the first page of his only book, 'Bandi Jivan' (Incarnated Life) he sings praises to the Glory of God. See the last page of the second part of this book and you find praises showered upon God in the way of a mystic. It is a clear reflection of his thoughts.

According to the prosecution, the 'Revolutionary Leaflet' which was distributed throughout India was the outcome of Sachindara Nath Sanyal's intellectual labour. So often it happens that in revolutionary activities a leader expresses his own ideas which may be very dear to him, but in spite of having differences, the other workers have to acquiesce in them.

In that leaflet, one full paragraph was devoted to the praises of God and His doings which we, human beings, cannot understand. This is sheer mysticism. What I want to point out is that the idea of denying the existence of God did not even occur to the Revolutionary Party. The famous Kakory martyrs, all four of them, passed their last day in prayers. Ram Parshad Bismal was a staunch Arya Samaji. In spite of his vast studies in Socialism and Communism, Rajan Lahiri could not suppress his desire to recite hymns from Upanishads and Gita. There was but only one person among them who did not indulge in such activities. He used to say, "Religion is the outcome of human weakness or the limitation of human knowledge." He is also in prison for life. But he also never dared to deny the existence of God.

Till that time I was only a romantic revolutionary, just a follower of our leaders. Then came the time to shoulder the whole responsibility. For some time, a strong opposition put the very existence of the party into danger. Many leaders as well as many enthusiastic comrades began to uphold the party to ridicule. They jeered at us. I had an apprehension that some day I will also consider it a futile and hopeless task. It was a turning point in my revolutionary career. An incessant desire to study filled my heart. 'Study more and more', said I to myself so that I might be able to face the arguments of my opponents. 'Study' to support your point of view with convincing arguments. And I began to study in a serious manner. My previous beliefs and convictions underwent a radical change. The romance of militancy dominated our predecessors; now serious ideas ousted this way of thinking. No more mysticism! No more blind faith! Now realism was our mode of thinking. At times of terrible necessity, we can resort to extreme methods, but violence produces opposite results in mass movements. I have talked much about our methods. The most important thing was a clear conception of our ideology for which we were waging a long struggle. As there was no election activity going on, I got ample opportunity to study various ideas propounded by various writers. I studied Bakunin, the anarchist leader. I read a few books of Marx, the father of Communism. I also read Lenin and Trotsky and many other writers who successfully carried out revolutions in their countries. All of them were atheists. The ideas contained in Bakunin's 'God and State' seem inconclusive, but it is an interesting book. After that I came across a book 'Common Sense' by Nirlamba Swami. His point of view was a sort of mystical atheism. I developed more interest in this subject. By the end of 1926, I was convinced that the belief in an Almighty, Supreme Being who created, guided and controlled the universe had no sound foundations. I began discussions on this subject with my friends. I had openly declared myself an atheist. What it meant will be discussed in the following lines.

In May 1927, I was arrested in Lahore. This arrest came as a big surprise for me. I had not the least idea that I was wanted by the police. I was passing through a garden and all of a sudden the police surrounded me. To my own surprise, I was very calm at that time. I

was in full control of myself. I was taken into police custody. The next day I was taken to the Railway Police lockup where I spent a whole month. After many days' conversation with police personnel, I guessed that they had some information about my connection with the Kakori Party. I felt they had some intelligence of my other activities in the revolutionary movement. They told me that I was in Lucknow during the Kakori Party Trial so that I might devise a scheme to rescue the culprits. They also said that after the plan had been approved, we procured some bombs and by way of test, one of those bombs was thrown into a crowd on the occasion of Dussehra in 1926. They offered to release me on condition that I gave a statement on the activities of the Revolutionary Party. In this way I would be set free and even rewarded and I would not be produced as an approver in the court. I could not help laughing at their proposals. It was all humbug. People who have ideas like ours do not throw bombs at their own innocent people. One day, Mr. Newman, the then senior Superintendent of CID, came to me. After a long talk which was full of sympathetic words, he imparted to me what he considered to be sad news, that if I did not give any statement as demanded by them, they would be forced to send me up for trial for conspiracy to wage war in connection with Kakori Case and also for brutal killings in Dussehra gathering. After that he said that he had sufficient evidence to get me convicted and hanged.
I was completely innocent, but I believed that the police had sufficient power to do it if they desired it to be so. The same day some police officers persuaded me to offer my prayers to God two times regularly. I was an atheist. I thought that I would settle it to myself whether I could brag only in days of peace and happiness that I was an atheist, or in those hard times I could be steadfast in my convictions. After a long debate with myself, I reached the conclusion that I could not even pretend to be a believer nor could I offer my prayers to God. No, I never did it. It was time of trial and I would come out of it successful. These were my thoughts. Never for a moment did I desire to save my life. So I was a true atheist then and I am an atheist now. It was not an easy task to face that ordeal. Beliefs make it easier to go through hardships, even make them pleasant. Man can find a strong support in God and an encouraging consolation in His Name. If you have no belief in Him, then there is

no alternative but to depend upon yourself. It is not child's play to stand firm on your feet amid storms and strong winds. In difficult times, vanity, if it remains, evaporates and man cannot find the courage to defy beliefs held in common esteem by the people. If he really revolts against such beliefs, we must conclude that it is not sheer vanity; he has some kind of extraordinary strength. This is exactly the situation now. First of all we all know what the judgement will be. It is to be pronounced in a week or so. I am going to sacrifice my life for a cause. What more consolation can there be! A God-believing Hindu may expect to be reborn a king; a Muslim or a Christian might dream of the luxuries he hopes to enjoy in paradise as a reward for his sufferings and sacrifices. What hope should I entertain? I know that will be the end when the rope is tightened round my neck and the rafters move from under my feet. To use more precise religious terminology, that will be the moment of utter annihilation. My soul will come to nothing. If I take the courage to take the matter in the light of 'Reward', I see that a short life of struggle with no such magnificent end shall itself be my 'Reward.' That is all. Without any selfish motive of getting any reward here or in the hereafter, quite disinterestedly have I devoted my life to the cause of freedom. I could not act otherwise. The day shall usher in a new era of liberty when a large number of men and women, taking courage from the idea of serving humanity and liberating them from sufferings and distress, decide that there is no alternative before them except devoting their lives for this cause. They will wage a war against their oppressors, tyrants or exploiters, not to become kings, or to gain any reward here or in the next birth or after death in paradise; but to cast off the yoke of slavery, to establish liberty and peace they will tread this perilous, but glorious path. Can the pride they take in their noble cause be called vanity? Who is there rash enough to call it so? To him I say either he is foolish or wicked. Leave such a fellow alone for he cannot realise the depth, the emotions, the sentiment and the noble feelings that surge in that heart. His heart is dead, a mere lump of flesh, devoid of feelings. His convictions are infirm, his emotions feeble. His selfish interests have made him incapable of seeing the truth. The epithet 'vanity' is always hurled at the strength we get from our convictions.

You go against popular feelings; you criticise a hero, a great man who is generally believed to be above criticism. What happens? No one will answer your arguments in a rational way; rather you will be considered vainglorious. Its reason is mental insipidity. Merciless criticism and independent thinking are the two necessary traits of revolutionary thinking. As Mahatmaji is great, he is above criticism; as he has risen above, all that he says in the field of politics, religion, Ethics is right. You agree or not, it is binding upon you to take it as truth. This is not constructive thinking. We do not take a leap forward; we go many steps back.

Our forefathers evolved faith in some kind of Supreme Being, therefore, one who ventures to challenge the validity of that faith or denies the existence of God, shall be called a Kafir (infidel), or a renegade. Even if his arguments are so strong that it is impossible to refute them, if his spirit is so strong that he cannot be bowed down by the threats of misfortune that may befall him through the wrath of the Almighty, he shall be decried as vainglorious. Then why should we waste our time in such discussions? This question has come before the people for the first time, hence the necessity and usefulness of such long discussions.

As far as the first question is concerned, I think I have made it clear that I did not turn atheist because of vanity. Only my readers, not I, can decide whether my arguments carry weight. If I were a believer, I know in the present circumstances my life would have been easier; the burden lighter. My disbelief in God has turned all the circumstances too harsh and this situation can deteriorate further. Being a little mystical can give the circumstances a poetic turn. But I need no opiate to meet my end. I am a realistic man. I want to overpower this tendency in me with the help of Reason. I am not always successful in such attempts. But it is man's duty to try and make efforts. Success depends on chance and circumstances.

Now we come to the second question: if it is not vanity, there ought to be some sound reason for rejection of age-old belief in God. Yes, I come to this question. I think that any man who has some reasoning power always tries to understand the life and people around him with the help of this faculty. Where concrete proofs are lacking, [mystical] philosophy creeps in. As I have indicated, one of my revolutionary friends used to say that "philosophy is the outcome of

human weakness." Our ancestors had the leisure to solve the mysteries of the world, its past, its present and its future, its whys and its wherefores, but having been terribly short of direct proofs, every one of them tried to solve the problem in his own way. Hence we find wide differences in the fundamentals of various religious creeds. Sometimes they take very antagonistic and conflicting forms. We find differences in Oriental and Occidental philosophies. There are differences even amongst various schools of thoughts in each hemisphere. In Asian religions, the Muslim religion is completely incompatible with the Hindu faith. In India itself, Buddhism and Jainism are sometimes quite separate from Brahmanism. Then in Brahmanism itself, we find two conflicting sects: Aarya Samaj and Snatan Dheram. Charwak is yet another independent thinker of the past ages. He challenged the Authority of God. All these faiths differ on many fundamental questions, but each of them claims to be the only true religion. This is the root of the evil. Instead of developing the ideas and experiments of ancient thinkers, thus providing ourselves with the ideological weapon for the future struggle, – lethargic, idle, fanatical as we are – we cling to orthodox religion and in this way reduce human awakening to a stagnant pool.

It is necessary for every person who stands for progress to criticise every tenet of old beliefs. Item by item he has to challenge the efficacy of old faith. He has to analyse and understand all the details. If after rigorous reasoning, one is led to believe in any theory of philosophy, his faith is appreciated. His reasoning may be mistaken and even fallacious. But there is chance that he will be corrected because Reason is the guiding principle of his life. But belief, I should say blind belief is disastrous. It deprives a man of his understanding power and makes him reactionary.

Any person who claims to be a realist has to challenge the truth of old beliefs. If faith cannot withstand the onslaught of reason, it collapses. After that his task should be to do the groundwork for new philosophy. This is the negative side. After that comes in the positive work in which some material of the olden times can be used to construct the pillars of new philosophy. As far as I am concerned, I admit that I lack sufficient study in this field. I had a great desire to study the Oriental Philosophy, but I could get ample opportunity

or sufficient time to do so. But so far as I reject the old time beliefs, it is not a matter of countering belief with belief, rather I can challenge the efficacy of old beliefs with sound arguments. We believe in nature and that human progress depends on the domination of man over nature. There is no conscious power behind it. This is our philosophy.

Being atheist, I ask a few questions from theists:

1. If, as you believe there is an Almighty, Omnipresent, Omniscient God, who created the earth or universe, please let me know, first of all, as to why he created this world. This world which is full of woe and grief, and countless miseries, where not even one person lives in peace.

2. Pray, don't say it is His law. If He is bound by any law, He is not Omnipotent. Don't say it is His pleasure. Nero burnt one Rome. He killed a very limited number of people. He caused only a few tragedies, all for his morbid enjoyment. But what is his place in history? By what names do we remember him? All the disparaging epithets are hurled at him. Pages are blackened with invective diatribes condemning Nero: the tyrant, the heartless, the wicked.

One Genghis Khan killed a few thousand people to seek pleasure in it and we hate the very name. Now, how will you justify your all powerful, eternal Nero, who every day, every moment continues his pastime of killing people? How can you support his doings which surpass those of Genghis Khan in cruelty and in misery inflicted upon people? I ask why the Almighty created this world which is nothing but a living hell, a place of constant and bitter unrest. Why did he create man when he had the power not to do so? Have you any answer to these questions? You will say that it is to reward the sufferer and punish the evildoer in the hereafter. Well, well, how far will you justify a man who first of all inflicts injuries on your body and then applies soft and soothing ointment on them? How far the supporters and organizers of Gladiator bouts were justified in throwing men before half starved lions, later to be cared for and looked after well if they escaped this horrible death. That is why I ask: Was the creation of man intended to derive this kind of pleasure?

Open your eyes and see millions of people dying of hunger in slums and huts dirtier than the grim dungeons of prisons; just see the

labourers patiently or say apathetically while the rich vampires suck their blood; bring to mind the wastage of human energy that will make a man with a little common sense shiver in horror. Just observe rich nations throwing their surplus produce into the sea instead of distributing it among the needy and deprived. There are palaces of kings built upon the foundations laid with human bones. Let them see all this and say "All is well in God's Kingdom." Why so? This is my question. You are silent. All right. I proceed to my next point.

You, the Hindus, would say: Whosoever undergoes sufferings in this life, must have been a sinner in his previous birth. It is tantamount to saying that those who are oppressors now were Godly people then, in their previous births. For this reason alone they hold power in their hands. Let me say it plainly that your ancestors were shrewd people. They were always in search of petty hoaxes to play upon people and snatch from them the power of Reason. Let us analyse how much this argument carries weight!

Those who are well versed in the philosophy of Jurisprudence relate three of four justifications for the punishment that is to be inflicted upon a wrong-doer. These are: revenge, reform, and deterrence. The Retribution Theory is now condemned by all the thinkers. Deterrent theory is on the anvil for its flaws. Reformative theory is now widely accepted and considered to be necessary for human progress. It aims at reforming the culprit and converting him into a peace-loving citizen. But what in essence is God's Punishment even if it is inflicted on a person who has really done some harm? For the sake of argument we agree for a moment that a person committed some crime in his previous birth and God punished him by changing his shape into a cow, cat, tree, or any other animal. You may enumerate the number of these variations in Godly Punishment to be at least eighty-four lack. Tell me, has this tomfoolery, perpetrated in the name of punishment, any reformative effect on human man? How many of them have you met who were donkeys in their previous births for having committed any sin? Absolutely no one of this sort! The so called theory of 'Puranas' (transmigration) is nothing but a fairy-tale. I do not have any intention to bring this unutterable trash under discussion. Do you really know the most cursed sin in this world is to be poor? Yes, poverty is a sin; it is a punishment! Cursed

be the theoretician, jurist or legislator who proposes such measures as push man into the quagmire of more heinous sins. Did it not occur to your All Knowing God or he could learn the truth only after millions had undergone untold sufferings and hardships? What, according to your theory, is the fate of a person who, by no sin of his own, has been born into a family of low caste people? He is poor so he cannot go to a school. It is his fate to be shunned and hated by those who are born into a high caste. His ignorance, his poverty, and the contempt he receives from others will harden his heart towards society. Supposing that he commits a sin, who shall bear the consequences? God, or he, or the learned people of that society? What is your view about those punishments inflicted on the people who were deliberately kept ignorant by selfish and proud Brahmans? If by chance these poor creatures heard a few words of your sacred books, Vedas, these Brahmans poured melted lead into their ears. If they committed any sin, who was to be held responsible? Who was to bear the brunt? My dear friends, these theories have been coined by the privileged classes. They try to justify the power they have usurped and the riches they have robbed with the help of such theories. Perhaps it was the writer Upton Sinclair who wrote (Bhagat Singh is referring to Sinclair's pamphlet 'Profits of Religion' – MIA transcriber) somewhere "only make a man firm believer in the immortality of soul, then rob him of all that he possesses. He will willingly help you in the process." The dirty alliance between religious preachers and possessors of power brought the boon of prisons, gallows, knouts and above all such theories for the mankind.

I ask why your Omnipotent God does not hold a man back when he is about to commit a sin or offence. It is child's play for God. Why did He not kill war lords? Why did He not obliterate the fury of war from their minds? In this way He could have saved humanity of many a great calamity and horror. Why does He not infuse humanistic sentiments into the minds of the Britishers so that they may willingly leave India? I ask why He does not fill the hearts of all capitalist classes with altruistic humanism that prompts them to give up personal possession of the means of production and this will free the whole labouring humanity from the shackles of money. You want to argue the practicability of Socialist theory, I leave it to your

Almighty God to enforce it. Common people understand the merits of Socialist theory as far as general welfare is concerned but they oppose it under the pretext that it cannot be implemented. Let the Almighty step in and arrange things in a proper way. No more logic chopping! I tell you that the British rule is not there because God willed it but for the reason that we lack the will and courage to oppose it. Not that they are keeping us under subjugation with the consent of God, but it is with the force of guns and rifles, bombs and bullets, police and militia, and above all because of our apathy that they are successfully committing the most deplorable sin, that is, the exploitation of one nation by another. Where is God? What is He doing? Is He getting a diseased pleasure out of it? A Nero! A Genghis Khan! Down with Him!

Now another piece of manufactured logic! You ask me how I will explain the origin of this world and origin of man. Charles Darwin has tried to throw some light on this subject. Study his book. Also, have a look at Sohan Swami's "Commonsense." You will get a satisfactory answer. This topic is concerned with Biology and Natural History. This is a phenomenon of nature. The accidental mixture of different substances in the form of Nebulae gave birth to this earth. When? Study history to know this. The same process caused the evolution of animals and in the long run that of man. Read Darwin's 'Origin of Species.' All the later progress is due to man's constant conflict with nature and his efforts to utilise nature for his own benefit. This is the briefest sketch of this phenomenon.

Your next question will be why a child is born blind or lame even if he was not a sinner in his previous birth. This problem has been explained in a satisfactory manner by biologists as a mere biological phenomenon. According to them the whole burden rests upon the shoulders of parents whose conscious or unconscious deeds caused mutilation of the child prior to his birth.

You may thrust yet another question at me, though it is merely childish. The question is: If God does not really exist, why do people come to believe in Him? Brief and concise my answer will be. As they come to believe in ghosts, and evil spirits, so they also evolve a kind of belief in God: the only difference being that God is almost a universal phenomenon and well developed theological philosophy. However, I do disagree with radical philosophy. It attributes His

origin to the ingenuity of exploiters who wanted to keep the people under their subjugation by preaching the existence of a Supreme Being; thus claimed an authority and sanction from Him for their privileged position. I do not differ on the essential point that all religions, faiths, theological philosophies, and religious creeds and all other such institutions in the long run become supporters of the tyrannical and exploiting institutions, men and classes. Rebellion against any king has always been a sin in every religion.

As regard the origin of God, my thought is that man created God in his imagination when he realized his weaknesses, limitations and shortcomings. In this way he got the courage to face all the trying circumstances and to meet all dangers that might occur in his life and also to restrain his outbursts in prosperity and affluence. God, with his whimsical laws and parental generosity was painted with variegated colours of imagination. He was used as a deterrent factor when his fury and his laws were repeatedly propagated so that man might not become a danger to society. He was the cry of the distressed soul for he was believed to stand as father and mother, sister and brother, brother and friend when in time of distress a man was left alone and helpless. He was Almighty and could do anything. The idea of God is helpful to a man in distress.

Society must fight against this belief in God as it fought against idol worship and other narrow conceptions of religion. In this way man will try to stand on his feet. Being realistic, he will have to throw his faith aside and face all adversaries with courage and valour. That is exactly my state of mind. My friends, it is not my vanity; it is my mode of thinking that has made me an atheist. I don't think that by strengthening my belief in God and by offering prayers to Him every day, (this I consider to be the most degraded act on the part of man) I can bring improvement in my situation, nor can I further deteriorate it. I have read of many atheists facing all troubles boldly, so I am trying to stand like a man with the head high and erect to the last; even on the gallows.

Let us see how steadfast I am. One of my friends asked me to pray. When informed of my atheism, he said, "When your last days come, you will begin to believe." I said, "No, dear sir, Never shall it happen. I consider it to be an act of degradation and

demoralisation. For such petty selfish motives, I shall never pray." Reader and friends, is it vanity? If it is, I stand for it.

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Bhagat Singh's Last Petition

To:

The Punjab Governor
Sir,

With due respect we beg to bring to your kind notice the following:

That we were sentenced to death on 7th October 1930 by a British Court, L.C.C Tribunal, constituted under the Sp. Lahore Conspiracy Case Ordinance, promulgated by the H.E. The Viceroy, the Head of the British Government of India, and that the main charge against us was that of having waged war against H.M. King George, the King of England.

The above-mentioned finding of the Court pre-supposed two things:

Firstly, that there exists a state of war between the British Nation and the Indian Nation and, secondly, that we had actually participated in that war and were therefore war prisoners.

The second pre-supposition seems to be a little bit flattering, but nevertheless it is too tempting to resist the desire of acquiescing in it.

As regards the first, we are constrained to go into some detail. Apparently there seems to be no such war as the phrase indicates. Nevertheless, please allow us to accept the validity of the pre-supposition taking it at its face value. But in order to be correctly understood we must explain it further. Let us declare that the state of war does exist and shall exist so long as the Indian toiling masses and the natural resources are being exploited by a handful of parasites. They may be purely British Capitalist or mixed British and Indian or even purely Indian. They may be carrying on their insidious exploitation through mixed or even on purely Indian bureaucratic apparatus. All these things make no difference. No matter, if your Government tries and succeeds in winning over the leaders of the upper strata of the Indian Society through petty concessions and compromises and thereby cause a temporary demoralization in the main body of the forces. No matter, if once again the vanguard of the Indian movement, the Revolutionary Party, finds itself deserted in the thick of the war. No matter if the leaders to whom personally we are much indebted for the sympathy and feelings they expressed for us, but nevertheless we cannot overlook the fact that they did become so callous as to ignore and not to make a mention in the peace negotiation of even the homeless, friendless

and penniless of female workers who are alleged to be belonging to the vanguard and whom the leaders consider to be enemies of their utopian non-violent cult which has already become a thing of the past; the heroines who had ungrudgingly sacrificed or offered for sacrifice their husbands, brothers, and all that were nearest and dearest to them, including themselves, whom your government has declared to be outlaws. No matter, it your agents stoop so low as to fabricate baseless calumnies against their spotless characters to damage their and their party's reputation. The war shall continue.

It may assume different shapes at different times. It may become now open, now hidden, now purely agitational, now fierce life and death struggle. The choice of the course, whether bloody or comparatively peaceful, which it should adopt rests with you. Choose whichever you like. But that war shall be incessantly waged without taking into consideration the petty (illegible) and the meaningless ethical ideologies. It shall be waged ever with new vigour, greater audacity and unflinching determination till the Socialist Republic is established and the present social order is completely replaced by a new social order, based on social prosperity and thus every sort of exploitation is put an end to and the humanity is ushered into the era of genuine and permanent peace. In the very near future the final battle shall be fought and final settlement arrived at.

The days of capitalist and imperialist exploitation are numbered. The war neither began with us nor is it going to end with our lives. It is the inevitable consequence of the historic events and the existing environments. Our humble sacrifices shall be only a link in the chain that has very accurately been beautified by the unparalleled sacrifice of Mr. Das and most tragic but noblest sacrifice of Comrade Bhagawati Charan and the glorious death of our dear warrior Azad.

As to the question of our fates, please allow us to say that when you have decided to put us to death, you will certainly do it. You have got the power in your hands and the power is the greatest justification in this world. We know that the maxim "Might is right" serves as your guiding motto. The whole of our trial was just a proof of that. We wanted to point out that according to the verdict of your court we had waged war and were therefore war prisoners. And we claim to be treated as such, i.e., we claim to be shot dead instead of to be hanged. It rests with you to prove that you really meant what your court has said.

We request and hope that you will very kindly order the military department to send its detachment to perform our execution.

Yours, BHAGAT SINGH